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JAN 20 2000

MS. PRYOR: My name is Linda Pryor. This is

22 the first time I've made a comment at a hearing and I'm
23 probably the only person who did not want to hear my name
24 called. I am a resident of the City of St. Louis and I'm
25 here to express my concerns regarding the proposal to
1 ship radioactive waste through St. Louis to a site at
2 Yucca Mountain.

3 First, I am opposed to moving radioactive
4 waste over long distance as proposed. The volatility and
5 health hazards of these materials are well documented.
6 But to briefly summarize, I quote from World Watch Paper
7 106, December, '91. "Scientists have found that
8 radiation can lead to cancer, degenerative diseases such
9 as cataracts, mental retardation, chromosome aberration
10 and genetic disorders such as neurotubule defects.
11 Radiation also weakens the immune system allowing other
12 diseases to run their courses unresisted. Damage occurs
13 at the atomic level within individual cells. The energy
14 embodied in radiation can be transferred to the affected
15 atom leading to damage, mutation or destruction of the
16 affected cells. The cumulative effect of cellular change
17 in turn is what undermines health. Children and fetuses
18 are particularly susceptible to radiation exposure
19 because their rapidly dividing cells are more sensitive
20 to damage."

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21 Obviously, we need to be concerned about
22 protecting the public from exposure. I believe the
23 government is taking this role in protection seriously
24 and has spared no expense or effort in finding a viable

25 solution, but I also believe that the government is
1 caught in a vice between the responsibility to protect
2 and pressure from the energy industry to dispose of waste
3 so nuclear plants can continue to operate. I believe the
4 government should resist the pressure from the industry
5 and not transport waste away from facilities before they
6 have a better solution than geological burial.

7 Again, quoting from numerous references in
8 World Watch, "Geologic disposal is nothing more than a
9 calculated risk. Future changes in geology, land use,
10 settlement patterns and climate all affect the ability to
11 isolate nuclear waste safely." As Stamford University
12 geologist Conrad Comstock wrote in Science, "No scientist
13 or engineer can give an absolute guarantee that
14 radioactive waste will not some day leak in dangerous
15 quantities from even the best of repositories."

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16 The cost of building these repositories
17 continues to rise and with the uncertainty of conditions,
18 waste may very well have to be unearthed and moved again.
19 I understand that Yucca Mountain was chosen because the
20 storerooms could be located well above the water table.
21 According to World Watch, "Critics led by a DOE
22 geologist, Jerry Szymanski, believe that an earthquake at
23 Yucca Mountain which is criss-crossed with more than 30
24 seismic faults, could dramatically raise the water. If
25 water comes in contact with hot radioactive waste, the
1 resulting steam explosion could burst open the container
2 and rapidly spray the radioactive contents."

...2

3 I don't like the idea of not doing something
4 about the waste. It's uncomfortable. It makes me feel
5 -- it makes one feel inadequate and somehow it seems
6 un-American, but in this case not doing something until
7 more is known and our way is clearer and our doubts have
8 been more safely addressed, it seems the wiser choice.
9 Thank you.